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THE JUNIOR BOOKSHELF

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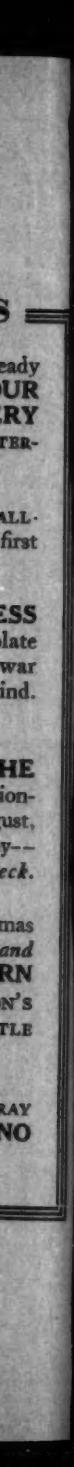

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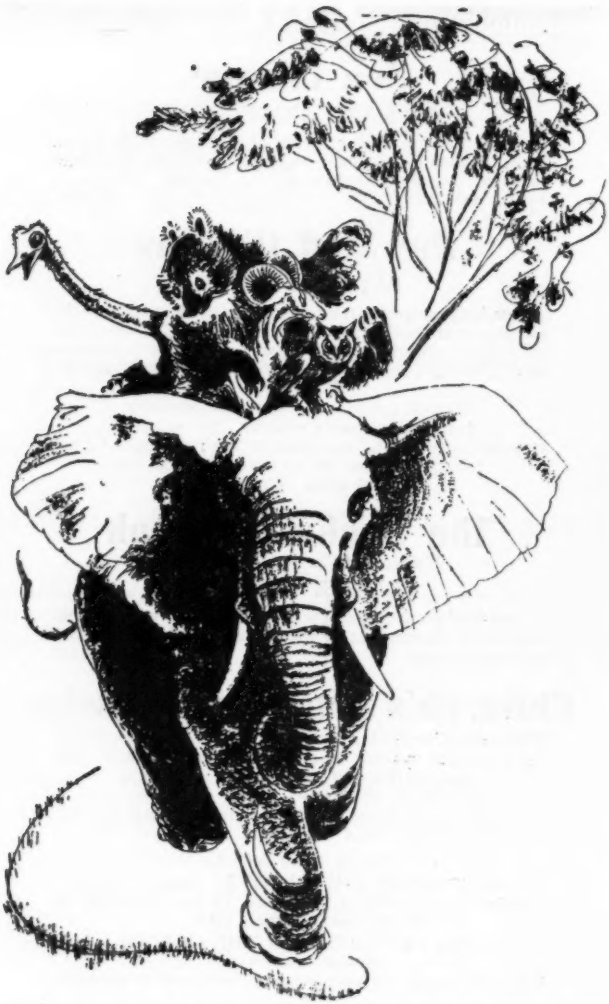

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THE
JUNIOR BOOKSHELF
DECEMBER 1948

Illustration by S. Van Abbè from *Treasure Island* (Dent).

The Birth of Golliwog

By EDGAR OSBORNE

WHEN in 1895 Florence Upton wrote *"The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls"* she lit upon an original name for her chief character, a name which was to become famous in English nursery literature and to be re-

corded as a new word in the Oxford English Dictionary: "Gollywog also Golliwogg: a name invented for a black (male) doll, fantastically dressed, with staring eyes and a shock of fuzzy black hair." You will notice that the extract from the dictionary makes no reference to Golliwogg as a character in children's literature; the absence of this is significant. The "Character" as understood by Theophrastus is of an engaging simplicity; there is no doubt that, even though Florence Upton may not have been aware of it, she was a faithful disciple of the Greek philosopher. It was the engaging simplicity and humour of her drawing that made her work so popular. Even to-day references to Golliwogg are common, although invariably the suggestion that is brought to mind is that of a bewitching black doll, and not of a leading character in a long series of children's picture books which began in 1895 and continued annually for many years.

E. F. Norton in his book, *"The Fight for Everest"* 1924, writes "every now and then I was struck afresh with the absurd golliwogg appearance of the party." Whether Norton had in mind a doll mascot, or a memory of his nursery books I do not know, but it is certain that Golliwogg still remains a well-loved figure in the nursery doll world, created from a character in English nursery literature. The problem is whether Golliwogg will survive as a literary character, or merely as a fascinating, lifeless figure around which children will weave their own romance. The complete absence of these charming nursery picture books from the book shops suggests that the toy shop, to use modern parlance, "has it."

A recent enquiry, amongst my friends and also amongst children's librarians, indicates that people know very little about Florence Upton, who in her day

became a portrait artist of considerable merit. Her reputation, however, will always centre around her imaginative work, as the creator of Golliwogg and his companions Sarah Jane, Peg, Meg, Wog and the Midget.

Florence Upton was born in 1873 in New York of English parents. When she was sixteen and still at school her father died and Florence had to look round for a living. Ever since Florence was a small child she had been devoted to drawing; although apparently she did not enjoy any systematic art training she nevertheless developed a talent for drawing character sketches of dolls and animals, and it is recorded that the family pets came in for a good deal of attention as models.

Although I have failed to discover any details of her work as an artist between the time of her father's death and her permanent return to England in 1893, it is known that she managed to secure work in America as a designer and illustrator, but whether for the book world, or some other branch of art or commerce, I do not know. When Florence was just twenty years of age she returned permanently to England with a determination to become an illustrator of children's books. Her skill as a book illustrator must have been high as she received many offers to illustrate other people's books, but such a task was by no means ambitious enough for Florence. Book illustration had no particular interest for her unless the characters to be illustrated were the creation of her own imagination. So for a time, living with her mother in very poor circumstances, Florence desperately searched for a theme. Mrs. Upton herself, evidently a woman of enterprise and imagination, was a constant source of encouragement, but none of the themes suggested by Florence's

family appeared to suit her particular kind of genius. There is a saying in my household that spring cleaning, however much we grumble about it, has its compensations : we always lose, but we generally find, something. A similar philosophic outlook must have prevailed in Florence's family. During a spring cleaning in the Upton household, the inspiration, that Florence had been so long looking for, came; she found some Dutch wooden dolls and a very battered black doll which suggested to her the kind of hero she needed to be the centrepiece round her group of feminine Dutch wooden dolls. How near the original black wooden doll may have been to the hero presented to the nursery in 1893 I am not sure; what is known is that the black doll led Florence on to expend a great deal of energy, colour and paper in the preparation of many drawings from which Golliwogg, Peg, Meg and the Midgets eventually evolved. After many series of drawings had been made, Florence's mother began to see that there was something distinctively original and attractive about them. She therefore suggested that they should set about planning the first Golliwogg book. Mrs. Upton (Bertha Upton) wrote the verses and Florence drew the pictures. Critics will agree that there is far more quality about the drawings than the verses; nevertheless, the partnership of mother and daughter ran right through the series. To find a publisher enterprising enough to see the possibilities that lay behind the ugly doll theme was a problem that took some time to solve. The cab journeys to publishers' offices were many and wearisome; nobody seemed to be interested in dolls and nobody appeared able to see the appeal that their absurd yet original character might have upon the imagination of children. A day came, however, when Mr. Allen, of Longmans Green and Co., who knew about the drawings and fully ap-

preciated their humour and originality, decided that before his firm finally rejected Florence Upton's proposed book it would do no harm to take the drawings home and try them on his own children. The experiment was an immense success, the children were wild with glee over the pictures, took Golliwogg immediately to their hearts and demanded more and more Golliwogg stories and pictures. Longmans, therefore, agreed to publish *"The Adventures of two Dutch Dolls."* The opinions of adults and children often take opposite directions. To adults appreciation of fantasy and humour becomes warped or blunted by contact with life's realities, with the result that it is not an uncommon experience to discover that a child's unfettered and spontaneous judgment becomes a surer guide than adult wisdom. Such proved to be the case with Golliwogg and his companions; children received the Golliwogg books with tremendous enthusiasm: they perceived that the expressive humorous faces of Golliwogg and his lady friends were personalities and they took them to their hearts, whereas the literary critics condemned them as forbidding, ugly and nonsensical.

After Florence had published her third or fourth book critics began to murmur about the ugliness of Golliwogg and also to search about for a reason why children read and read again the adventures of Golliwogg and his friends. The criticism grew in amount and after the ninth volume appeared even Florence herself began to doubt the wisdom of continuing her picture story of the dolls' adventures, but fortunately she pinned her faith to the judgment of children and the volumes continued until sixteen appeared.

Seven years after the first Golliwogg book appeared one critic wrote that for the life of him he could not

understand why it was that "anything so hideous should please and even fascinate children." The impression of ugliness still prevails in the minds of many adults who remember the Golliwogg books, but, as Florence Upton was often heard to say, "he has a good heart", and in a letter to a friend she writes: "anyway children consider him to be a dear, good fellow and often I find that children are far and away ahead of adults in reading character."

All through Florence's life incidents connected with the Golliwogg would crop up. His black face appeared on advertisement hoardings, he became the chief figure in many charitable appeals and for years he appeared on Christmas Cards. His figure was made into inkpots, paper knives, paper weights and goodness only knows how many other articles to be found in seaside fancy goods stores. There were nursery wall friezes and even a Golliwogg symphony, written by Debussy.

No Golliwogg book appeared after 1912. I do not know whether this was due to a decline in public interest, but I am certain that Florence Upton's temperament, lovable and sympathetic to children as she always was, became a contributory cause to the end of the delightful series of nursery books. Florence had gradually developed an interest for the inner spiritual life until it became an absorbing passion, she lost interest in her books for children and devoted her time to psychical research; by most people, therefore, it is the earlier and creative period of her life by which she will be best remembered.

One remaining fact should be recorded. In 1917 three hundred and fifty original drawings of Golliwogg and his friends and a case holding the original dolls, Golliwogg and his Sarah Jane, Peg, Meg, Wog and the Midgets, were sold at Christie's for the benefit of

the Red Cross. The result of the sale was a considerable sum, enough to equip a complete ambulance car with the following inscription: "Florence Upton and the Golliwogg gave this ambulance." Some of the framed pictures can be seen in the London Museum and the case of dolls went to Chequers, the home of the Prime Minister of England. To many people this may appear an odd kind of resting place, not, perhaps, the most appropriate gift to the home of famous men. But why not? Who made the decision to give the dolls to Chequers I do not know; there may have been no specific purpose behind the gift, yet maybe the donor hoped

"'Twere well with most if books that could engage
Their childhood, please them at a riper age."

An International Youth Library

Plans are afoot for the formation of an International Youth Library and such plans merit the wholehearted support of every children's librarian. Visualised as an international institute for children's affairs, through which young people could see and read books from other countries, the original idea for the organisation was derived from an International Youth Book Exhibit which started in Munich in July, 1946. On that occasion book contributions were received from 21 foreign countries—many of them former enemy countries. The exhibit, consisting of more than 6,000 books and children's paintings, travelled through the British, French and American zones of Germany and was viewed by an estimated million children and grown-ups.

We hope (though we have no knowledge at present) that some official body in this country has associated itself with the International Library and that this collection of children's books may be on exhibition shortly in this country. As soon as we have been able to obtain further details of the new organisation we will pass these on to our readers.

Children's Book Illustrators of Today

IV Harold Jones

By GLORIA COLLINS

WHEN Miss M. E. Atkinson wrote her first novel for children in 1936, calling it *August Adventure* and Harold Jones was invited to provide it with pictures, a prolific partnership was forged, which continued unbroken throughout the next six years—until finally brought to a conclusion by the interference of World War II.

Harold Jones was born in London in 1904, and when he grew up, at first it was intended that he should be a farmer. He therefore went to work on a farm near Stratford-on-Avon, where he remained for a year. But although born with a deep love for the simple things, and for the country in which he worked, he found himself repelled, and out of all sympathy with that part of the life which entailed the disposal, and subsequent butchering, of the animals amongst whom he spent a part of each working day. The more certain he became that this was not the way he desired to expend his life, the more surely but steadily grew the conviction that it was as an artist that he wished to express himself.

Therefore, he soon left the land and returned to London, took a job and in the evenings studied drawing and composition at Camberwell School of Arts & Crafts. From there he obtained a Royal Exhibition to the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, where he came under the influence of Sir William Rothenstein, who was during these years at the height of his own prowess as a teacher of art.

Whilst at the College he studied all forms of drawing, design and engraving, and shortly after leaving to take up teaching himself for the first time he became deeply interested in lithography, which was to play an important part in his development as an artist. The earlier books illustrated with the pictures of Harold Jones show very clearly the influence of the engraver in their qualities of draughtsmanship, their simplicity and restraint in composition. These qualities have never been permitted to disappear from either his lithographic drawings nor yet from his paintings, whatever further development may be arrived at.

Since leaving College he has divided his working life between teaching, and the pursuit of his own individual talents in both pictorial illustration and painting in the wider sense.

During the late war, four continuous years of military service spelled the intense determination to increase his development as a painter, and to this end his activities since the war have been mainly directed. Always before him is the urgent problem and desire of progress and improvement in order to compel the medium he uses to become the slave of his imagery. This insistence on personal progress and development has proved one of his most valuable assets.

For some years now Harold Jones has been permanently settled in Putney, where he has the good fortune to have a house "neither far from the river, nor far from the heath with its birches." All the variety he desires is near, and except for occasional visits to Paris, a city he dearly loves, he seldom leaves his home. His wife, like himself, is a talented artist, and he has two small daughters. These three beings

have formed the basis and background of much of his work. Indeed, for those who are acquainted with them, their portraits, interests, and pursuits are mirrored constantly from the pictures drawn for the earliest of the Atkinson novels to the last of the most recent canvases, yet are so transformed as to have acquired their own character and form, becoming in the end the final entity of a dual imagery.

The first of the Atkinson novels *August Adventure,* published by Jonathan Cape, was followed in the next year, 1937, by *Mystery Manor,* published by the Bodley Head, who also were responsible for the publication of all the other novels which Miss Atkinson wrote with Harold Jones as her illustrator. They were *The Compass Points North* 1938, *Smugglers' Gap* 1939, *Going Gangster* 1940, and *Crusoe Island* 1941.

These adventures for children came forth, it is seen, in speedy and rapid succession, but the same year that saw publication of *Mystery Manor,* saw also the creation of a work of much originality, artistry, and wit.

Walter de la Mare, visiting the publisher Faber & Faber, saw a collection of coloured lithographs of great charm and delight, to which the artist had intended to write verses depicting incidents throughout the passage of the year from its inception to its last and dying day, as seen in the remembering mind of a child. The poet expressed the wish to write poems himself to the varying moods evoked by the fantasy and vision of the artist, and so was created *This Year Next Year,* considered by many to be one of the loveliest books ever produced for children.

Children love a picture to be simple for their understanding and yet to contain a wealth of such simplified

detail, that they may stretch and exercise their minds and yet find further treasures contained therein. The mind of a child will always place itself within the framework of the picture, and identify itself readily either with one or another of the figures contained therein, or, it may be, by a direct association with the scene depicted. Harold Jones perfectly understands this elementary need, therefore, a painting or picture in his hands does not only enable a child to follow this process, but positively eggs him on. *This Year Next Year* does it superbly, not in one but in all of its gay, riotous yet restrained, triumphant *Penny Plain Tuppence Coloured* way. It must be stressed that in point of fact there is precious little of the Penny Plain about *This Year Next Year,* a work of such charm, that any reasonably discerning parent must inevitably at one time or another have snatched it away from his or her child, lest it be damaged. *This Year Next Year* must count amongst the classics of book illustration. Alas, that it is now unobtainable, for during the War, the plates were destroyed, and no further copies can now be reprinted.

Shortly after the publication of this work, Harold Jones conceived the idea of writing as well as illustrating his work. His two daughters, Stephanie and Pamela, were therefore each promised a book. In both cases the heroine and central figure was to be the child herself, bearing her own name, and identified even more closely with herself, by association with certain objects of every day familiarity, which in the stories were to be surrounded with an aura of phantasy.

The first of these, *The Visit to the Farm,* appeared in 1940, and was illustrated in black and two colours. The writing and publication of the second was delayed until the Spring of 1947 owing to the author's war

service with the Army. The book was, however, commenced during this military service. It appeared under the title of *The Enchanted Night* and was more than ever concerned with the Dream-life of the child. It moves easily, both in the writing and the drawing, from one plane of magical thought to the next. During this same year, 1947, has been published the most recent work in the field of Book Illustration. This is *Selected Poems,* by John Pudney, published by the British Publishers' Guild, The Bodley Head, where once more with the artist's capacity for delving into the subject matter, there is created a fusion between the drawings and the spirit of the poems. This is most noticeable in the full-page illustration to *The Elegy for Tom Roding,* where the stillness of the deserted room, the set and empty table, contrasts strangely with the movement of the playing children in the street without. The pathos is intensified by the simplicity and restraint of the work.

The whole business of illustration has been deeply studied by the artist, who, from many early years spent with and teaching children, has formed strong convictions concerning the whole question of making pictures for the young.

He says that he has always been impressed by the fact that when children look at pictures they demand information first and foremost, and he considers, therefore, that it is the problem of the artist to supply a drawing which will give the facts, and yet so control them, that the rhythmic pattern of conception is not lost sight of, which of course is of primary importance to himself. Furthermore, it is this artist's sincere opinion, that how successful a children's illustrator will be, depends wholly on how well he is able to solve this problem. Every drawing made for a child's book

should be considered as permanent as a mural decoration. It should be a thing which can be picked up and gazed at again and again.

A child should be given of the best, but in the form he will best understand. And the problem should always remain in the artist's mind, never to be forgotten, and always to be improved on with each work.

It is to be hoped that Harold Jones' present intoxication with the painting of magical things into the simple subjects of his newer oil-paintings will not cause him to desert entirely the world of books, as an illustrator of which he has much understanding, and is so permanent a master. Perhaps he feels that his books are so personal to him, that his work assumes a special wholeness only when he is both artist and author. On the other hand, when the qualities in *This Year Next Year* are mentioned, he has said :

" I have been paid no greater tribute than that which Walter de la Mare made me when he wrote a number of poems to my pictures. That he should have considered my work sufficiently worthy subjects for his pen will always be to me a lasting honour."

Harold Jones admires and treasures the lovely language of de la Mare, beyond all modern writings.

THE JUNIOR BOOKSHELF LIBRARY——The following volumes have recently been added :—*Rex Whistler* by L. Whistler ; *Hans Christian Andersen,* by S. Toksvig ; *The Poetry of Nonsense,* by E. Cammaerts ; *Fairy tales and legends by Hans Andersen,* (illustrated by Rex Whistler); *Grimm's Fairy Tales,* complete edition, (illustrated by J. Scharl); *Pilgrim's Progress,* (illustrated by Clarke Hutton); *History of the Horn Book,* by H. W. Tuer ; *Isaac Watts,* by A. P. Davis ; *Captain Mayne Reid,* by E. Reid ; *The Child and His Book,* by Mrs. E. M. Field ; *George Cruickshank,* by B. Jerrold ; *Science of Fairy Tales,* by E. S. Hartland.

Children's Books in France

By JESSIE M. EVANS

A visit to a French bookshop or a Publisher's offices to-day suggests that translations of English books are the chief literary diet throughout France. Especially true of books for adults it holds good for children's books also. Besides such classics as Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, and many old favourites quite a number of modern works are to be found, though these are not so plentiful as is modern adult fiction.

Consequently the visitor is inclined to exclaim, on looking at the serried rows, " What lots of translations. But where are the books by French authors? What sort of book is being produced to-day by French writers for children?"

Actually these are not far to seek and when found they are seen to be thoroughly delightful.

First and foremost for the younger ones comes the fairy story. French fairy stories are charmingly told and the covers of the books containing these stories are particularly fascinating, being splendidly illustrated in colour. An excellent collection of such stories is " Contes de la fée joyeuse " by Paul Cleroue. In these the adventures of Rémy and Françoise with their fairy godmother are related. The stories are fresh and exciting and the lovely coloured illustrations as well as the excellently-designed black and white drawings add to the delight of the book. The "jacket" is calculated to arouse the expectation of good things; it shows Rémy and Françoise on their way to a marvellous fairy castle. These stories were broadcast and delighted a large number of young French listeners to the radio.

Another collection of fairy tales which is a great favourite with French children is " Nullino and Stellina." This, which is a translation from Italian, deals with the different adventures of two "little" people, who, since they are so small that they can hide among the petals of a flower, would be subjected to countless dangers were it not that they are protected by the good fairy, Splendour.

Fables are a heritage of the French, and French children are able to possess very beautiful editions of their great classic, the " Fables de la Fontaine." Other favourites are the " Fables de Florian " and a beautifully designed book by Roger Devigne called " Les douze plus belles fables du monde." Illustrations by Andre Helle help to make this a memorable book containing, as it does, examples of folk lore from Greek, Italian, Japanese, Hebrew, Chinese, Hindoo, Scandinavian, Persian, French and other sources. Quite memorable are " La Querelle de chien et chat " and " Le chant du Chevreau," the latter a sort of chant of the type " The house that Jack built." Repetition, so beloved of children everywhere, makes this particularly fascinating. Another pleasant story is "Le Renard et le Coq" taken from an old Scandinavian tale. It is a version of our old English " Cock and Fox " and, as in Chaucer's story, Renard is outwitted by Chanticleer. The Chinese fable " Les singes avengles et l'elephant blanc " may be known to English children but its humour will bear repetition and " Le lievre blanc et les crocodiles de mer " is likely to be fresh to young readers and is lively enough to arouse their interest.

Another particularly interesting book is " Par Montes et par Vaux " written by L. Bourliaquet. This deals with the adventures of five animals—a cock, a young pig, a dog, a donkey, and a cat. They are all

good friends and have most surprising and humorous adventures during their companionship. A new note, however, is struck near the end when four of them meet a tragic end. A similar note of tragedy occurs in parts of another story by the same writer—" Les aventures du petit rat, Justin," though the little rat after sundry accidents and many frights is allowed to preserve his life at the end. Two more books describing the future adventures of Justin follow this, viz " Sept peaux de betes " and " Justin, chez les hommes," so obviously the poor little animal cannot be killed in the first one ! Yet he saves his life by a hair's breadth many times in the course of a few pages, and performs valiant deeds in rescuing others of his tribe also. Most of his troubles happen, when in search for help, since his own colony of rats is being attacked, he encounters in quick succession cats, owls, human beings, dogs and such fearsome dangers as thunderstorms, fire and flood. In the ensuing volumes Justin, weary of such frightening adventures, wishes to change his existence and is able to do so. He first lives as other animals and then as different types of man but at last he is glad to end the miseries of these kinds of existence by becoming a rat again.

Another type of book which is popular in France at the present time is that dealing with the work of young people. A charming tale of this description is called " Memoires d'un petit artisan." It is written by E. Repesse and has charming illustrations by Jacques Touchet. It tells of the young Giles Fontenne who, in the thirteenth century, wished to become an " Imagier " i.e. a maker and painter of images. The story of his life is given, pathos and humour are intertwined, and the conditions of apprenticeship at that time are clearly noted. The historical background

with the account of the guilds of the artisans is skilfully represented so the whole forms a useful historical document as well as a delightful tale.

A story which should especially appeal to boys is "Milot," an account of an actual French boy's search for work, written in the form of fiction by Charles Vildrac, the renowned French dramatist, whose play "La Brouille" is being played at present by the members of the Comedie Française. The photograph of Emile Cottinot, the *real* "Milot" is given as a frontispiece. While his father is away on a voyage Milot who hoped some day to follow the parental trade of seamanship is sent to live with an aunt. His adventures begin with the loss of his railway-ticket and with the knowledge that his aunt, with whom he was to live at Marseilles, has gone to Morocco. His telegrams to her announcing his late arrival (when the loss and subsequent finding of his ticket cause him to take a later train) come into the hands of some of her friends and these kind people look after him and allow him to share their modest homes. He feels he must keep himself, however, so he attempts various kinds of work, even the most unpromising work such as washing dishes at a restaurant. He has sundry setbacks and meets different types of people, "recognised" porters who object to his carrying a suitcase for a passenger getting off a boat, a boy who cheats him out of his small amount of money, as well as "patrons" who treat him with kindness and give him a little more than he is due to receive. This is a book written with great sincerity and French boys who have "Milot" on their bookshelves are very lucky. The same dramatist has written a charming book for little girls. This is called "Bridinette" and it tells the story of a rather delicate little girl Bridinette, who is the daughter of a Parisian

concierge. The doctor decides that she should have more fresh air and some good country fare so she is sent to her relations in the country. The life there seems full of enchantment to her and her life at school and with her playfellows during the seasons of the year is simply but beautifully described. The reader can really enter into the little girl's joy at having a garden and a dog of her own and into her feeling of apprehension at the thought of returning to Paris. The story ends most happily as her parents come to live in a cottage in the village since a cobbler is required there and the father has learnt this trade. So Bridinette, who has changed during a year from a puny undersized child, into a robust little girl, is full of happiness and we leave her drinking the health of the doctor who first suggested that she and her doll, Marise, (an important character in the story) should be sent away to taste the country air.

It seems that authors in France set out to cater for children's tastes; they do not "write down" to children and they make their tales realistic by introducing some sadness and occasionally even tragedy into the lives of their characters. But laughter wins the day usually at the *end* of the tale and this too is in keeping with the French spirit which believes in the joy of youth.

The New Books

FOR LIBRARIANS

Grimm's Fairy Tales : complete edition. Illus. by Josef Scharl. 864 pp. 9 × 5½. Routledge 30/–

This is a volume that should find its position on the personal reference shelf of every children's librarian. It is a rich storehouse of tales and there are many, rarely seen in popular collections, that are of merit at least equal to the better known titles. Furthermore the translation (based on that by Margaret Hunt) is close to the original and should therefore be a useful aid to librarians in order to check those "retold" versions that are sometimes fobbed off as "Grimm's Fairy Tales." The appropriateness of the illustrations may be a matter of taste. The Folkloristic Commentary by Joseph Campbell with which the volume concludes should also be of use to librarians because of the information it contains on the history of the tales, their varying types and on the work of the Brothers Grimm.

H.J.B.W.

PICTURE BOOKS

BAYNES, P. D. *Victoria and the Golden Bird.* Illus. by the author. 32 pp. 9¾ × 7¼. Cloth back. Blackie 5/–

This is one of the most striking picture books of the year. It consists of a series of doublepage pictures in brilliant colour each depicting the people and habits of a separate country to which a magic bird takes little Victoria and her pet hedgehog. Each picture shows much detail and the little hedgehog appears in each in some amusing position or other. The brief text is subsidiary to the pictures, which by the way are far more interesting than the dust jacket leads us to expect.

H.J.B.W.

DE BRUNHOFF, L. *Babar and that Rascal Arthur.* Illus. by the author. 48 pp. 14¼ × 10¼. Cloth back. Methuen . . 10/6

Laurent de Brunhoff in providing this new story-picture book in the tradition of his father's genius has succeeded well in giving us a book that, at any rate in the necessarily cursory examination permitted in a review, might well have been by the creator of Babar. The physical appearance of the book, its size, illustrations and text in script, (so difficult for small English children to read) is like its predecessors, and the pleasing little story of Arthur's latest escapade is in the same strain. Unfortunately I have been unable to compare it with the other Babar books but I feel that it will be accepted by its young readers as authentic De Brunhoff.

H.J.B.W.

WRATTEN, M. *Miranda.* Illus. 44 pp. 9½ × 7¼. Boards. Hollis & Carter . 6/-

Miranda is a pretty, conceited fish who is saved from the consequences of her vanity through the devoted courage of Little Fin. A familiar theme, but in cases like this the story is only an excuse for the pictures. Miss Wratten handles colour pleasantly, and her fishes have personality. But surely the characteristic of underwater life is movement, and this she has failed to convey. Her fishes hang motionless beside rigid flowers and weeds. The book is clearly worth while, but by any standards its physical make-up is deplorable.

M. S. Crouch

FOR CHILDREN UNDER TEN

AESOP, *Fables.* Illus. by B. Artzybasheff. 96 pp. 8½ × 5½. Skilton 7/6

Boris Artzybasheff's best known work in this country is *Seven Simeons* which Cassell's published before the war and have recently reprinted. The distinguishing feature of that book is the exquisite pen work. The decorations are all done in pen and ink, intricate scroll work. In his illustrations to *Aesop* this penmanship is observable in the endpapers.

The illustrations show the artist in a different medium, excellent woodcuts displaying a somewhat sardonic humour much in keeping with the Fables. That the appeal of this edition will be stronger to adults than to younger readers cannot be denied but the humour of these drawings will not be lost on the latter. Undoubtedly a fine specimen of book production this will rank as one of the finest editions of the Fables extant.

H.J.B.W.

B.B. *Down the Bright Stream.* Illus. by Denys Watkins-Pitchford. 200 pp. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$. Eyre & Spottiswoode 12/6

Five years ago I read the book to which this is a sequel *The little grey men* and found it true and good, and likely to have a permanent place on children's bookshelves. I came to this, therefore, disposed to enjoy it and to praise. Sequels, however, are apt to be tricky things. Life has moved on in the interval of time since the original was conceived and the author cannot always recapture the mood that inspired it. Five years ago B.B. seemed eager to share something with the children of the day, and to put his readers in the way of discovering for themselves some of his own experiences. "Keep very quiet," he wrote in his preface, "watch and wait by the streams and in the woods." Now he seems to infer that there is nothing left worth watching or waiting for and the readers had better, like the gnomes, flee to other lands where conditions of life may be pleasanter. His little Grey Men are no longer the upright creatures they were, but mere puppets acting out the author's ideas and expressing something of a small disgruntled section of the populace who are throwing up the sponge and getting out of this worried country of ours.

The story is uneasy, full of betrayals and disasters. The few human beings are unpleasant. The atmosphere is of discontent and anxiety. The gnomes deciding to escape to Ireland in the *Jeannie Deans* is absurd enough ; their building of a glider to be towed by the owl across the Irish Sea, at the level of the Severn Estuary is fantastic ; and even then, the author decides to add to the excitement by setting the glider on fire and making the little men descend with parachutes which they have made for themselves. It may be argued that children will

enjoy the tale without bothering their heads about any implications which may lie behind the action—but does anyone want them to take the letter and ignore the spirit of what they read, to grow accustomed to a single snap-reading because a second yields more of disappointment than deeper interest?

Eleanor Graham

BENNETT, R. *Duncan into Dandy.* Illus. by E. Aris. 208 pp. 8 × 5. Harrap . 7/6

Dandy began life as Neddy, a very ordinary and very small donkey. He became successively Duncan, a little boy's pet, Cockey, a coster's "moke," Neptune, a seaside donkey, and finally Dandy, the most famous circus donkey in the world. His adventures are told in a lively and humorous style, the coster episode going with particular swing and flourish. The human characters have individuality and are drawn with a verve and abandon well suited to their types and the author has a keen eye for the unconsciously amusing as well as for the broadly humorous.

But it is Dandy's cleverness and his possession of the "personality" so much prized by young people of today which will endear him and his book to these readers.

E.R.W.

CAMPBELL, M. *The Three Tregunters.* Illus. by Mary Shillabeer. 70 pp. 8½ × 6. Museum Press 5/-

This is a story and picture book which sets out to portray the life of an ordinary, pleasantly-united family. A highly praiseworthy object, but need the Tregunters be so unremittingly charming? They welcome their Daddy home (Daddy is the complete RAF "type"); they go with him to Buckingham Palace to receive a medal ; they play with the puppy he buys them ; they go for a day in the country. Throughout these operations they are so remorselessly sweet that the reader longs for a little honest bad temper or selfishness. Unfortunately their brightness is contagious. Everyone from daily help and policeman to the King himself goes through life in the same golden haze. Miss Campbell writes easily, but she must remember that only Pooh thrives on an exclusive diet of honey.

I am a great admirer of Miss Shillabeer's work, but the illustrations lack inspiration—and who can blame her !

M. S. Crouch

CUTHBERT, D. *Six and a secret.* Illus. 248 pp. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. Heinemann 8/6

The Isle of Man forms an unusual and pleasing background to this slow moving but well constructed mystery story concerning the adventures of six children, some of their parents, the police (represented by the local sergeant) and a desperate gang of criminals. Unfortunately, crime is becoming an increasingly frequent ingredient of children's stories these days : here it is theft on a large scale which involves running the booty across the Island for shipment westwards. The first clue that anything unusual is afoot is discovered by the children while on a Saturday fishing trip up a lonely glen ; from then onwards, evidence is collected until the police and other grown-ups are called in to help in the final round-up, which makes quite an exciting climax. The children are residents, so we are saved the usual tedious preliminaries to a holiday excursion; an advantage which is, perhaps, rather offset by over-laboured characterization, especially of the adults, which slows the pace and will undoubtedly lead to a certain amount of " skipping " by young readers.

D. D. Chilcot

DENES, G. *John and Jennifer at the Farm.* Illus. 39 pp. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 8$, boards. Nelson . 7/6

This latest addition to the John and Jennifer series tells of their stay on their uncle's farm. The normal farm routine is described and John and Jennifer take a hand in it. The coloured photographs are well chosen and executed, forming an excellent commentary on the story.

H.J.B.W.

FIDLER, K. *The Brydons Go Camping.* Illus. by A. H. Watson. 176 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. Lutterworth 6/-

Another " Brydon " tale about a family now well-known on the wireless. The family goes camping, at an old Roman site, and though they don't discover any Roman relics they are instrumental in recovering a stolen sixteenth-century miniature. Those who know this happy family of old will welcome their further adventures and will also learn much about how (and how *not*) to put up a tent, how to light a fire out-of-doors, and other useful camping information. For younger boys and girls, and particularly suitable for reading aloud.

Lorna Lewis

GARDNER, H. *Beyond the marble mountain.* Illus. by J. Kiddell-Monroe. 126 pp. $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. O.U.P. 6/-

One approaches a new story of talking animals with something like distaste, but such feelings are unwarranted in this instance. Mr. Gardner must, I think, have told these stories to children before committing them to paper, and the book happily suggests improvisation. There is nothing particularly original, but young children will like these episodes of the home-loving ostrich and the goat with the wanderlust. Miss Kiddell-Monroe, who touches no book without enriching it, has provided some exquisite black-and-white drawings ; and the book, which is excellently printed, has been designed with care.

M. S. Crouch

HILLSTEAD, A. F. C. *Ula and the Spriggans.* Illus. by S. Shepherd. 226 pp. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. Faber 10/6

The publishers have given this book a pretty and inviting wrapper and the same design makes the title page—but I found th story dreary, although by the terms of the dedication, *To all those who find solace in the green places,* it should have been right up my street. The life of the green places as described here however, has not the bright true ring we are so happily accustomed to from the lively pens of watchers and observers. It is largely a fabrication, devised to carry the pseudo-heroic tale of a quest laid on Ula the blackbird by the fairies with whom, the introduction says, the story is really concerned. Alas, even the fairies are poor pale survivals of the lively piskies and brownies of Cornish folklore, and the convolutions of the plot wind unconvincingly on over the 226 pages of the book, with illustrations that at times lose their first sense of proportion and at others embarrass by the crudeness of imagination.

Eleanor Graham

HOLDING, E. S. *Miss Kelly.* Illus. by M. S. Johnson. 116 pp. $8 \times 5\frac{1}{4}$. M. Joseph . 7/6

Miss Kelly is a rather charming two-year-old cat, of considerable intelligence, and having the remarkable gift of being able to speak Human. However, having been warned by her

mother that it was extremely dangerous to let on to Humans that one could speak their language, she refrained from doing so until her home was invaded by a tiger escaped from the Zoo. In order to save her Humans, and to help the frustrated, jungle-sick tiger himself, she spoke in Human ; and after some tricky moments all round, got herself appointed as a Zoo visitor, speaking to the animals and reconciling them to their captivity. This little fantasy has its moving moments, and it will certainly please cat-lovers, old and young. Illustrations and production keep up the high standard.

Lorna Lewis

PEAKE, M. *Letters from a lost uncle.* Illus. 128 pp $7 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. Eyre & Spottiswoode . 3/6

Many years ago Mr. Peake gave us a *Hunting of the Snark* which evoked the true spirit of that extraordinary poem. *Letters from a Lost Uncle* is the story of another quest which possesses something of the same nightmare quality. Like *The Snark* too it is very funny indeed.

The lost uncle is an endearing character. He was born in Tulse Hill but ran away within a week. (There is a delightful picture of this). That was the fitting beginning to a life of wanderings. He deserted his wife—and no right-minded child will blame him, for the unreasonable woman objected to his keeping rats in the lounge—and, with an odd tortoise-like servant named Jackson, set off on the quest of the White Lion. How that quest was achieved is told in a series of improbable episodes in which suspense is admirably sustained.

The lost uncle had his typewriter with him (Jackson carried this along with all the other luggage), and the book is made up of typewritten scraps of paper pasted into a book, the margins of which are filled with pictures of the uncle, Jackson, whales, puffins, and other animals less easily identifiable. Smears of blood, soup and washing-up water add touches of colour.

This is an experiment in book-making which one would not wish repeated, but which is, I feel, entirely successful. The story has fun, excitement and a strange beauty. The drawings are by Mervyn Peake, that is to say, they are of the highest technical excellence, vigorous, grotesque, and with a touch of diablerie which may distress parents but in which most children will delight. Mr. Peake has more than half an eye on an adult audience, but with guidance young children will enjoy this

story in which nonsense and high adventure are so admirably blended.

M. S. Crouch

SEWELL, H. *Birthdays for Robin.* Illus. by the author. 46 pp. 7 × 7, boards. Hale . 4/-

Robin wanted a dog but on his birthdays he was given a stuffed rabbit, a teddy bear, a stuffed elephant, a cat, two woolly goats and a pony. At last his daddy gave him a dog, a dog as tall as Robin's daddy, and this was the best present Robin ever had.

A satisfying little story for the youngest readers, very charmingly illustrated with coloured lithographs.

H.J.B.W.

SOPER, E. A. *Songs on the wind.* Illus. 56 pp. 10 × 7¼. Museum Press . . . 7/6

The company of good writers of children's verse is small, and Miss Soper is not of the elect. This is not to say that she lacks felicity of phrase, and the poems which she has illustrated herself bear the sign of much care and thought. Both verse and pictures are, however, likely to prove too insipid for most modern children, whose tastes, I feel, are for something more robust, imaginative and colourful. The book is pleasantly produced.

M. S. Crouch

THOMSON, B. K. *Sally.* Illus. 55 pp. 8½ × 6½. Blackwell 4/6

The author is new to me, but I desire his better acquaintance. *Sally* is one of those rare animal books in which the hero has no human qualities grafted on to him. Sally remains a cat, denied the powers of speech and logical thought, but endowed with the resource, speed and grace of her race. In this story she inadvertently runs away to sea, and finds in the rough good-humour of a coaster her natural surroundings. How she gains the goodwill of the crew and does the ship good service makes an excellent story. Physically the book is no more than adequate, and the story is worthy of better illustrations.

M. S. Crouch

TONKS, R. *On wooden wings; the adventures of Webster.* Illus. 119 pp. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. Murray 6/–

Webster is a small boy who set off one morning with Tramp (a pavement artist), a dog and a remarkable cat to turn the Weathercock on top of the steeple and so change the wind which was blowing no good to Sebastian the Very Sad Waiter. The Weathercock flew off and our band of adventurers found themselves in a strange country whence they returned (by a canal boat) after three very crowded days. The author possesses an easy style and a knack of making incredible happenings seem possible, rather in the "Mumfie" tradition. Miss Tonks is her own artist and her bold and attractive illustrations, some of which are coloured, add considerable atmosphere and appeal to these delightful but inconsequent adventures.

D. D. Chilcot

TORREY, M. *Penny.* Illus. by the author. 106 pp. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$. Harrap 7/6

TORREY, M. *Artie and the Princess.* Illus. by the author. 80 pp. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$. Harrap . 7/6

These well produced books will delight almost every child under 10, but more especially the little girls. Both stories come up to the standard set by the excellent illustrations.

Penny is a little girl from New York who goes to spend a holiday with her father's aunt in the country. At first she is lonely and her aunt seems frighteningly aloof. But after attempting to run away and finding herself back at the house of her aunt, Penny and the old lady come to a full understanding of one another, and from that moment it is the most wonderful holiday. Penny is alive in every page and she steps out to introduce the young reader to all her friends, and one shares in all their games, both make believe and real.

Artie and the Princess is the story of a young dragon who goes forth from his forest home to seek a companion of his own age. After journeying through strange country he comes at last to a mountain on top of which is a castle wherein lives Princess Pandy who longs for a companion to play with. Artie is introduced to lots of new games and thoroughly enjoys his

life with the Princess. Everyone loves Artie and so will the reader. The story is peopled with Nursery Tale characters familiar to young people.

C.C.

TRACY, E. B. *Paddles : the story of a sea-lion.* Illus. by Ralph Nelson. 80 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$. Harrap 4/-

A great deal of information about sea-lions—their habits in their natural state and their training for circus and stage purposes— is to be found in this little book. The story of how Paddles became the most famous sea-lion in the circus world is well told. The kindness and patience of his trainer Ole Swenson is a satisfying ingredient, as is the eventual return of Paddles to the island of his birth off the coast of California. The narrow margins give the printed pages a somewhat crowded look.

J. B. Ferguson

UTTLEY, A. *Sam Pig in trouble.* Illus. by A. E. Kennedy. 212 pp. 8×5. Faber . . 7/6

It is no disparagement to say that this is the mixture as before. We all like Sam Pig. He is a complete personality, executed, one might say after a glance at his portrait, quite literally "in the round." In these stories he has a highly characteristic series of adventures which display his high spirits and resource. Children will have heard some of the episodes in Children's Hour ; one of the best is the story of Sam Pig's valentine.

Miss Uttley is one of those rare children's writers who spares not even a sidelong glance for the adult reading over the child's shoulder. She writes for the child alone, and gets into the child's mind with uncanny skill. The new Sam Pig is as good as ever, and as excellently produced.

M. S. Crouch

WARNER, P. M. *Embroidery Mary.* Illus. by the author. 159 pp. $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. Harrap . 12/6

The purpose of this book is to interest little girls in embroidery, to teach them the essentials of good and truly artistic work and to give some instruction in making simple articles with elementary stitchery. From the practical point of view it is a very

successful undertaking and the child who follows the sequence of work suggested here will make a good beginning. The author stresses the necessity for suitable materials and designs, and fitness for purpose. Emphasis is laid on the special character of embroidery and the limitations and general rules imposed by the materials themselves. The child is encouraged to attempt her own designs, and is shown how one thing develops naturally from another. The illustrations are bold, clear and easy to follow. The story is a simple holiday one, spoiled by a sentimental and babying attitude towards the children, but it contains the theory of instruction and cannot be passed over. There is no doubt that any little girl will be able to learn a great deal from this book. The appearance including cover and endpapers is unusually attractive and it will make an ideal Christmas or birthday present. Ages 8 to 14.

E.R.W.

YONGE, C. M. *Countess Kate.* Illus. by Gwen Raverat. 216 pp. 8¼ × 5¼. Faber . 10/6

We may be pleasantly surprised that in choosing to reprint one of Miss Yonge's stories the publisher has passed by the obvious titles familiar to most of us. But it would seem that the choice was not theirs. Gwen Raverat is partial to Victorian stories and *Countess Kate* was her choice. She and her publishers have given us a very attractive book, and if as they claim *Countess Kate* is not merely a period piece this charmingly illustrated and produced edition should give it a new lease of life.

H.J.B.W.

FOR CHILDREN FROM TEN TO FOURTEEN

BENNETT, R. *Fable plays.* Illus. by Astrid Walford. 131 pp. 8 × 5¼. Harrap . 7/6

Bright, lively plays for younger children are not too plentiful. Rodney Bennett's collection of animal plays contains at least three which could be attempted by the youngest of actors. The action is simple and exciting, while the verse form will encourage performers to master their parts. There are some agreeably absurd rhymes which will raise hearty laughs from school audiences — for example :

" Look at this snippet of rind off a gammon.
Oh ! it's got whiskers of lusciousest ham on."

Wise provision for *ad libbing* is made in selected instances in the plays, as, for example, in "None so blind" when the monkeys make endless suggestions regarding the correct use of a pair of spectacles. Such devices encourage the players to use their initiative and to adjust their material to the feel of the audience. The decorations are gay and attractive.

J. B. Ferguson

BOLTON, I. *Son of the Land.* Illus. 188 pp. 8 × 5½. Blackwell 6/-

In addition to the succession of exciting incidents which the publishers praise, this book is noteworthy for the amount of historical fact which is neatly dovetailed into the story of a young serf's bid for freedom. The abortive Peasants' Revolt under Wat Tyler is described in conscientious and circumstantial detail while the reader also gains much incidental information about the unsettled state of the country and the effects of foreign war and the Black Death, and about the City Guilds and life in London. The writing though not distinguished is simple and interesting and the author endeavours to show that this is an important transition period when men's minds, especially among the younger generation, were slowly assimilating revolutionary ideas. Yet one feels that she does not make it sufficiently clear that in her insistence on the rights of the masters she is only voicing the opinions of older people of the time. That Roger should renounce his hope of freedom to save life is understandable but that he should accept the thesis that his attempted escape is wrong seems incredible and out of character. One can indeed pay too high a price for freedom but the modern young mind will have nothing but sympathy for Roger Gleason.

E.B.W.

BOOTH, A. *The Secret of the harvest camp.* Illus. 222 pp. 8 × 5. Faber . . . 8/6

A harvest camp would seem a promising setting for a story of useful effort and well earned leisure in rural surroundings ; it could be enlivened, perhaps, with a neat plot to hold the young reader's attention to the very end. It is most disappointing, therefore, to open this book, scan the grotesque black and white illustrations and plunge into a story which is false, unconvincing and impossibly complicated. A school mistress (really a German spy, of course) who can dis-

guise herself well enough to deceive six of her sharp eyed pupils must surely be a phenomenon ; add a pot-hole, a secret workshop, a helicopter, a German prisoner who turns out to be the long lost brother of one of the girls, and many coincidences and you have the gist of this story—or have you ? So much print and so much paper wasted — and such a promising idea, too.

D. D. Chilcot

BROWNING, G. H. *Getting to know Wild Flowers.* Illus. by Harold Riddett. 96 pp. $9\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. Collins 10/6

Those who recollect a work on wild flowers by this author published before the war and now long out of print will have no doubts as to the authority of the text in *Getting to know wild flowers.* Any doubts as to the usefulness of the book for young readers are concerned with Miss Browning's method of presenting her material. I feel that the value of any book on such a subject lies in its use in the field and this is no use there because of its format. It is a chatty sort of book, very pleasant to look at and for armchair leisure—it is indeed in every way a delightful book. The artist's pencil drawings are useful, his coloured plates pleasant to look upon and as a Christmas gift the book is to be recommended. As a practical book it has less in its favour than many smaller volumes.

H.J.B.W.

CHARLTON, M. *Pendellion.* Illus. by Lionel Edwards. 237 pp. 8×5. Methuen . 8/6

Set in Elizabethan days, with only slight historical background, this book yet reflects something of the atmosphere of the times, not as they appear to us but expressing the uncertainty and anxiety felt by the contemporary populace. But young people will enjoy it as an exciting tale of life on a Cornish estate complete with much riding and hunting and a few wild pranks. The hunting of the Royal hart is a particularly memorable and moving event. The writing is good, the wild Cornish scene is well drawn, and the characters are, in the main, individual and alive, while the brief glimpses of historic figures arrest attention and are easily recognisable by those who have some idea of their recorded personalities.

E.R.W.

Collins' Magazine Annual. Vol. 1. 1948. Illus. 312 pp. 11 × 8. Collins . . . 12/6

We have refrained from mentioning Collins' magazine until we had seen the whole of its first year's issues (the *Annual* contains the first six months). The long preparation of this magazine made us curious about it and the fact of its being published by Collins led us to expect something boldly planned and unusual in contents. Heralded with many advertisement fanfares it at last appeared. Unfortunately the inconceivably stupid regulations of Government departments made it impossible to launch a new magazine, (obviously much needed in view of the complete lack of any modernly planned magazine for young people) while any old derelict title could be purchased and re-issued in a new form so long as the original title remained intact. Collins boldly overcame this difficulty by having their new venture published in Canada and imported on a subscription basis. It is sincerely to be hoped that the department concerned will soon see how ridiculous their regulations are, so that *Collins' Magazine* can be purchased at any bookstall by whoever is inclined to pay the price.

And " there's the rub," for the price (1/6 each monthly number) makes this at once a magazine for the upper and middle classes only, not because the " lower " classes *cannot* afford but because they *will* not.

The publishers may have realised this fact from the start because the stories and articles are of the type favoured by the upper and middle classes. Even the opening story by Dale Collins, though frankly " blood and thunder " (an extremely good example of the genre) will have that class appeal. Dale Collins' story completely dominated the first six issues. This may not have been intended though I suspect it was. The immediate effect is to give the impression that this is a boys' magazine. Closer examination shows this not to be the case and such writers as Noel Streatfield, Eve Garnett and Monica Edwards contribute material of especial interest to girls. Whether or not this endeavour to catch the support of both boys and girls will be successful remains to be seen.

Other features cover nature and exploration, handicrafts, sport and such expected miscellanies as puzzles and competitions. There is also a regular feature about books by Viola Garvin, the first attempt I have ever encountered to approach books in a children's magazine in an intelligent manner with emphasis on quality.

Briefly my impressions of *Collins' Magazine* is that it is unique in childrens periodical literature in that it appears to have been inspired by the wish to provide a high intrinsic standard of literary entertainment, with many excellent drawings and photographs, but I feel that it would be read by the children in *Swallows and Amazons* rather than by those in the the *Family from One End Street*. I wish it ever growing success. It deserves it.

H.J.B.W.

COMFORT, M. H. *Winter on the 'Johnny Smoker.'* Illus. by H. C. Pitz. 224 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. Muller 6/–

"Ol' Man River" must by now have been the hero of countless stories for old and young, many of which, originally published in America, have reached this country. It is a tribute both to Miss Comfort's skill and the river's heart-gripping character to say that this tale of Mississippi life seems, to one reader at least, as fresh as any subject now on the market. The Dustins, whose father, Captain Bill, risked his winter's salary in buying the side-wheeler river boat, Johnny Smoker, are as nice a family as you can want. How one envies the fun they had, wintering on the boat, sawing timber, and finally winning the race into port which was to secure them free wharfage for the summer at St. Paul! And how one's mouth waters at the delicious meals cooked by Mrs. Dustin! This is a good story both for boys and girls—indeed the ostensible "heroine" is a ten-year-old girl, Rella, though her brothers and red-haired Johnny Sterling, hacksawyer, threaten to steal the picture. The plot is slight, but the atmosphere and detail makes one feel at home with the Dustins all the way down the river.

Lorna Lewis

CRAIGIE, D. *The voyage of the Luna I.* Illus. by Dorothy Craigie. 272 pp. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5$. Eyre & Spottiswoode . . . .

The twins, Martin and Jane, stow themselves away on an experimental space-ship and arrive on the moon. The "scientific" atmosphere, the talk of instruments, oxygen masks and the like will be eagerly lapped up by boys of 10-14.

Although the rocket-ship tends to overshadow the story generally, the personal relationships of the twins with their parents are well handled. The unattractive character, Cyril, is rather too reminiscent of Bunter.

J. B. Ferguson

DAWLISH, P. *Dauntless sails again.* Illus. by P. A. Jackson. 200 pp. 8 × 5½. Oxford 8/6

When Capt. Blake set off with five boys on a sailing trip up the West coast of Scotland their main object was to reach the Isle of Skye, gather a bunch of heather and return home with it at the mast head. They did not expect to find themselves chasing smugglers, and indeed they would not have done so but for the meeting with Mr. McDougall, ex-Customs official and an old friend of Capt. Blake. Mr. McDougall's abundant knowledge and aptitude for telling tales of the coast wins the boys' hearts, and they forsake their original plans in order to follow the smugglers. But it is only after the malicious wrecking of the Dauntless by the smugglers that the boys determine to have their revenge at all costs and enter the chase with enthusiasm.

This is a story that will appeal to boys from 11 upwards particularly those who enjoy sea-stories, for Mr. Dawlish combines an exciting adventure with authentic detail of navigating, fitting out, and sailing of a small vessel.

C.C.

DEVERSON, H. J. *The Map that came to life.* Illus. by Ronald Lampitt. 32 pp. 8½ × 11¼. O.U.P. 8/6

This is an excellent pictorial introduction to map reading. Two children set out with an ordnance map on a three mile walk to a country fair ; each stage of the route is pictured in beautiful colour lithography across two pages and is accompanied by the relevant section of the map and the story of the children's adventures. The illustrations are arresting enough to capture any child's interest ; the enlarged map sections invite curiosity ; and if the incidents (and landmarks) are a little crowded on so short a walk, this can be forgiven in a book which so successfully combines interest, instruction and amusement. Although the format suggests a picture book for young children, the age appeal is mainly nine to eleven or even older.

D. D. Chilcot

DOUGAN, O. C. *The Forbidden holiday.* Illus. 240 pp. 8 × 5¼. Faber . . . 8/6

The theme of this story is so interesting in itself that it seems a pity to spoil it, especially in the second half of the book, by introducing so much extraneous adventure, presumably in an effort to create excitement. The divided loyalties of two children lead to an inward conflict between duty and affection towards their French father and his new wife and loyalty to the memory of their Scots mother who sacrificed her life in the Resistance Movement. The children feel themselves constantly pulled in two directions ; fifteen-year-old Marie perhaps even more than her brother, for Rob has already decided that he is a Scot and despite his father's opposition, he is quite fixed in his determination to reach Scotland, where he is heir to an impoverished family estate. Accustomed to acting on their own initiative and helped by fortuitous circumstances, the children manage to travel from Paris to Scotland, unknown to their father. In Scotland, they plunge into an anti-climax of unnecessary and complicated adventure, involving spies of some kind or other. Marie, of course, returns to France, but Rob stays in Scotland, although he finds that he has left "a little of his heart in France for ever." This could have been a very good story, but the writing is as uneven in quality as the plot and the illustrations are the "scribbly" kind which most children dislike.

D. D. Chilcot

EDWARDS, L. *Getting to know your pony.* Illus. by the author. 78 pp. 9¾ × 7. Collins . 10/6

Lionel Edwards need fear no rival in the field of drawing horses. In this book he has given us an excellent collection of good coloured plates and spirited pen and ink sketches.

The text describes the various breeds ; Shetlands, Exmoor, Dartmoor, Arabs, Highlands etc. and there are chapters on care and general management. This, like other titles in the series, is more suitable as a present for pony lovers rather than a book of instruction for the beginner. The instruction is given more usefully in other books. It is nevertheless a book that is a delight to possess.

H.J.B.W.

FENNIMORE, S. *Bush Holiday*. Illus. by Sheila Hawkins. 180 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. Heinemann 6/-

A book that will appeal to all children interested in life in Australia, seen in this instance through the eyes of an English boy who goes to stay with a Mr. MacLeod, who has a son, Bill, and a younger daughter, Penny. The little girl welcomes this addition to the family, but the boy is disdainful of a "Pommie," until Martin, by a series of events, amusing and serious, in which he acquits himself well, earns Bill's ungrudging approval.

In addition to adventures the book gives in a pleasing manner much information on the country and on life there. The reader will delight every bit as much as Martin in the new scenery around him, the people he meets and all the new sights and sounds with which he becomes acquainted.

The characters are real throughout.

C.C.

FITZGERALD, B. V. *Bird Biology for Beginners*. Illus. by L. R. Brightwell. 178 pp. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. Cassell 8/6

In this book the descriptions are based entirely on the personal observation of the author, presented in a simple and direct manner.

The style is lucid and there are plenty of illustrative examples of several features of bird life—movement in the air, on the land and in the water, methods of breathing, feeding, and keeping warm. We learn why a bird does not fall off his perch when asleep ; how and why there are different adaptations of anatomical structures to meet differing environmental conditions.

The book is well written, but is more of a text book than a book for leisure. The line illustrations are satisfactory as may be expected of an artist of Miss Brightwell's reputation, and are suitably placed in the text. The book should prove an attractive introduction to the study of birds for children of 12 upwards.

C.C.

FOREST, A. *Autumn Term.* Illus. 256 pp. 8 × 5¾. Faber 8/6

It is a great pleasure to find a school story which gives the impression that the author has some first hand acquaintance with modern educational institutions, their staff and pupils.

The dice are indeed loaded against Nicola and Laurie when they enter the boarding school where their four elder sisters—the eldest Head Girl—all enjoy positions of importance, but the twins begin with a laudable determination to uphold the family record. Their efforts and the varying results make an original, often amusing story which is extremely well told with an avoidance of stock situations and characters. Every scene is credible and worked out with thoroughness and the animation of reality. A lowly form—Third Remove—with Nicola, Laurie and the Head Mistress's niece Tim—occupies the centre of the stage. The character drawing is good, the children emerging as real personalities with their normal share of faults and virtues, and they do not suffer complete change of heart and become perfect angels by the end of the chapter. They remain true to type with only minor and possible improvements. The conversation is that of girls with a modicum of intelligence and occasional sparks of wit, instead of the banal ineptitudes and giggling would-be smartness which pass for conversation in the majority of school stories. Even Tim, boastful among her fellows, takes no liberties in the actual presence of authority. The whole story is thoroughly well conceived and conscientiously and fully developed. It has life and vigour and I can recommend it without reserve as the best school story I have read for many a long day. The production is good, but I feel the artist might have given us more variety of feature. I should not care to sit for long before a class of such unrelievedly plain, long nosed, wide mouthed pupils.

E.R.W.

KYLE, E. *West Wind.* Illus. by F. Gower. 288 pp. 8 × 5¼. P. Davies . . . 8/6

Told in Miss Kyle's usual forthright style this is an exciting tale of the adventures which befall Nigel and his cousin Pamela in West Wind Island. Pamela is at first bored with her surroundings, but the strange behaviour of Nigel's old friends and of Mrs. Finucane's maids soon rouses the suspicions

of the children. The unearthing of a very exciting mystery follows. I feel at times that the story is a little farfetched and the children almost too clever to be true, but nevertheless lovers of Miss Kyle's earlier stories will not want to miss the thrills she once again offers them.

E.R.W.

Lasting Victories. Illus. 192 pp. $8\frac{3}{4} \times 6$. Lutterworth 12/6

This book contains a series of true travelling experiences and adventures in many lands, described by narrators who took part in the scenes. Collectively they form a series of interesting accounts which take one from mountain tops, deserts and tropical forests to railway engines, aeroplanes and ships. Each story is a victory of peace though one or two occurred in wartime. Most of them recapture the spirit of exploration and discovery and will appeal more particularly to boys. The photographic illustrations are excellent, but they should be placed with the episodes to which they relate.

C.C.

LYNCH, P. *The Mad O'Haras.* Illus. by Elizabeth Rivers. 338 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. Dent 8/6

I admire Patricia Lynch's work with all my heart, her feeling for people, her insight, her subtle understanding of human nature, her integrity and her rare gift as a storyteller—but this wild story did not satisfy me at any level. I kept wondering, are there still, after all our world has been through, really mad O'Haras like these, grown men and women who boast an ancient name, a kingly descent, an overweening pride and yet live in almost pigsty conditions? Having never a penny to bless themselves with, yet they scorn to go out and work for a living : they lounge about eternally, playing cards, telling fortunes, quarrelling, carrying on feuds with decent hard working neighbours, boasting, senselessly destructive, their pride so inflammable that no one can live with them. Such, at any rate, is the scene into which 13-year old Grania appears. She is the daughter of the eldest son, long dead. Her mother, remaining herself with the O'Haras, had sent her baby to be brought up otherwise in the decent household of an industrious Aunt and Uncle who are preparing to apprentice her to a dressmaker. Grania's ambition, however, was to be an artist

and at that crisis in her affairs she is snatched abruptly out of the respectable middle-class home and plunged into life at Castle O'Hara.

There are some memorable scenes but the impact of these sharply contrasted personalities on one another is ill-developed. The story feels unplanned, as though the author herself did not know from scene to scene what she was going to use or how she was going to shape her plot ; consequently the narrative cannot flow but is chopped about and confused in purpose. I found it hard to believe in Grania—because of the incompleteness of the picture, and in this kind of story there needs to be a hero or heroine who has the reader in a firm grip all the time. Some of the time, I was not sure even that it was a 'teen-age' book. It is, I think, one of those betwixt and between stories which the uncritical 'teen-age' or adult will enjoy.

Eleanor Graham

MORTON, K. F. *Animals of Buttermilk Hall.* Illus. by M. Shillabeer. 104 pp. 8 × 5. Harrap 5/-

A great variety of wild and tame animals and birds figure in these true stories told by an obviously keen and observant nature lover. In the personal and unsentimental manner of one anxious to impart, not only knowledge but something of her own deep interest and quiet enthusiasm, the author gives much fascinating and often little known information about such diverse creatures as waterhens, rooks, hares, cats and mice, dogs, horses, rats and even the insects and birds which inhabit the ivy on the walls of the house. Mrs. Morton believes that many animals, for various reasons, show almost human qualities of intelligence, affection and power to think and remember. Many country dwellers could add anecdotes in support of this, and one effect of this book may be to encourage children themselves to watch for and note similar evidences of animal cleverness, not due entirely to instinct. No child could fail to enjoy and profit from this book—a few may even discover that they too can have "the gift" which Linda from London slums so astonishingly developed.

E.R.W.

OAKLEY, W. *The Boy's Workshop Companion.* Illus. 216 pp. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$. Lane . . 8/6

Although the publishers suggest that the approach to the subject in this book is out of the ordinary I have failed to find in it much that is not to be found in other works covering the same field. It deals with the tools required for woodwork and metalwork, and how to keep them sharp. The author stops short just when the young worker would like a few suggestions on what to make, though the principles involved, when mastered, qualify him to begin makings things. The beginner does welcome suggestions and this book would have been more welcome had it given a few.

H.J.B.W.

O'CLEARY, H. *Sparks Fly.* Illus. by B. Thornborough. 192 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. Collins . 8/6

This is something of a hotch-potch but I suspect that its faults are those of inexperience for it has plenty of good stuff in it, and a genuine feeling for the things children love to hear about—the big natural things which can't be turned on and off at will by omnipotent grown-ups, great storms, shipwreck and the mysteries of the sea, and hard times courageously dealt with. The author, thank Heaven, has realised that it is not money and go-as-you please that makes happiness in childhood, but the soundness of parental principle, the certainty of family affection and understanding.

The characterisation here is not yet very accomplished and the author has not managed her narrative very well. She has not realised that it is not necessary to recapitulate all that went before the story she wishes to tell, so her early chapter is tiresome. But several times I felt she was on the verge of something very good indeed and though she could not get her material to take shape, notable promise is here and should be duly noted.

I like the feeling of the illustrations which hold more of real life than is generally the case, and play their own part in persuading the reader to go on.

Eleanor Graham

PARDOE, M. *Bunkle and Belinda.* Illus. by J. Neild. 215 pp. 7½ × 5. Routledge . 7/6

"Bunkle" has, so his publisher points out, achieved radio greatness. Popularity in Children's Hour is no criterion of literary merit ; an episodic character and clearly labelled types may be desirable there, for the listener may not return to the spoken word as the reader to the written. These are not necessarily the first requirements in a book, even when it is meant for children, whose intelligence so many writers persistently underrate.

This work, then, is not particularly noteworthy. The adventures in it are of the usual type, Bunkle finding his way (against orders, of course) into a re-opened Cornish tin mine. There he finds evidence that pitchblend is being smuggled for what turn out in the end to be perfectly legitimate and topical, if improbable reasons, and the book ends in a gallimaufry of pirate treasure, village concerts and disclosures of one sort and another.

There is little attempt at character drawing, which may be as well, for in the first few pages the hero is extremely rude to one admittedly disagreeable old lady, and soon refers to another whose hospitality he is enjoying as an "old trout." Is it merely pernicketty to suggest that even in this uninhibited age this kind of thing is unnecessary? Later, he loses any individuality, and moves conventionally through the story's situations. Altogether, one is left with the feeling that since the writing is good, and the telling has verve, the achievement might have been very much greater, and not all the votes of all the Bunkle fans will impress me into thinking this a good book.

The production looks well, an effect to which the pleasant sketches of Julie Neild largely contribute.

S. Revill

PYE, V. *The Stolen Jewels.* Illus. by R. Kennedy. 154 pp. 8½ × 5. Faber . . 8/6

Although the "I" of this story is a boy of fifteen, the story is for boys and girls around eleven. A straightforward, simply told tale about jewels stolen, *re*-stolen, replaced, and yet again re-stolen, on the boat and boat-train to Switzerland,

where, as one might expect from this author, ski-ing starts. Nothing very subtle here, but a quick-moving, "thriller" with a neat bit of code-work. Miss Pye is perhaps not quite at her best, but there's a lot here to like.

Lorna Lewis

ROBINSON, M. *High School.* Illus. by Margaret Horder. 215 pp. 7½ × 5. Peter Davies 8/6

The girls at the High School certainly had an invigorating and often quite violent time : Lucy and Judy, and Molly the sneak, and Barbara the athletic and born-to-be-a-prefect new girl ; and Miss Pritchard the music-mistress, Miss Conti, Italian art-mistress, and the families of the cheerful, excitable gangsters of the Upper Third. They played games hard, kicked each other sometimes, messed up their exams, and indulged in practical pranks and daydreams just like (or fairly like) their prototypes in real life. The actual school activities here are breezily described—other young school-girls will dote on them. Miss Robinson seems less at her ease when she tackles the psychological problems of the girls, particularly in their home lives.

Lorna Lewis

SAVILLE, M. *Redshank's warning.* Illus. by Lunt Roberts. 206 pp. 5 × 7¼. Lutterworth 7/6

Once again Mr. Saville displays his talent for "setting" his action in a particular locality. In this instance it is the salt-flats of Norfolk. The book is a family-holiday-adventure, with the action played out in and around the village of Blakeney. The family, known collectively as "The Jillies," is an unusual and very likeable combination. Though not too well provided for yet it manages to make the most of life. The illustrations in the text are not too happily conceived.

J. B. Ferguson

TREASE, G. *Silver Guard.* Illus. by A. Blyth. 220 pp. 8 × 5½. Blackwell . . . 6/-

The hero of Mr. Trease's new book is a boy from America who comes to England to study medicine at Oxford, and who finds himself caught up in the Civil Wars. His English re-

lations, some of whom will be familiar to readers of Mr. Trease's earlier books, have sympathies with Parliament in this quarrel, and become involved in a private war with a Royalist neighbour. The attack upon and the defence of Silver Guard, their home, forms the best part of the book.

To ride sound history and exciting fiction in double harness is a difficult task even in an adult novel, where the author has more room to qualify and elaborate. Mr. Trease aims at presenting the issues of this tangled conflict of principles as they made themselves apparent to the judgment of a young stranger, and one should not perhaps complain if at times the simplifications necessary seem to be at the expense of the history, a danger which the author meets to some degree in a well-contrived foreword.

For the rest, the book has a quality both from its intention and in its writing which lifts it well above the usual level. It is well produced, and the illustrations, by Alan Blyth, are vigorous and effective. It will appeal strongly to the child whose reading has risen beyond the mere sensation stage.

S. Revill

WOODRUFF, P. *The Sword of Northumbria.* Illus. 289 pp. 8 × 5¼. Cape . . . 9/-

The author disclaims any historical basis for his story, characters, or stage properties. The origin of the theme is apparently to be sought in boyish game and fancy. The young reader will not care—how can he feel that anything but truth could be bolstered up by such detailed maps of countries, battles, bloodhound chases, coloured plates of armorial bearings and so on? There is everything here that young people like and understand—no equivocation, no doubtful causes, no heroes with a dash of villainy or villains with redeeming features. Everything and everybody is of an uncompromising regularity, true to the boy's accepted types—there is a long sustained struggle, with some ups and downs, but there is never any doubt that the hero will ultimately triumph and there will be nothing but satisfaction among the highly moral young at the horrible but well deserved end of the villain. In fact I felt highly satisfied myself, despite a normal streak of squeamishness and there is little doubt that throughout this strenuous tale, the reader's reactions will be as partisan and decided as those of the youthful audience I once heard vociferously encouraging Olivier and his soldiery in Henry V.

E.R.W.

FOR THE INTERMEDIATE LIBRARY

BOYLSTON, H. D. *Carol on Tour.* Illus. by Major Felton. 191 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. Lane . 7/6

I am not surprised that Helen Dore Boylston's stories are popular. She is evidently a born storyteller. This is only the second I have read of them all. The other was the first *Sue Barton* book which, though it interested me, was about a system and conditions so different from our own in the nursing world, (and apparently so full of glamorous opportunities) that I felt our English girls might be very much misled by it. *Carol on Tour* seems to me a great advance on the nurse books. It is persuasive and the author shows a sense of responsibility in her presentation of the hard way to success, describing hard work and study and not relying on glamour and romance for popularity. Her cheerful argument about the characters in *The Merchant of Venice,* for instance, prods the dreamy reader into more thoughtful mood. Her gay rallying of the company on tour, wiling away the long railway journey with snatches from Gilbert & Sullivan has, again, actuality behind it. Miss Boylston writes in italics, certainly, but thereby she gets her emphases over to even the chronic skipper whose left eye never sees what the right has scooped from the opposite page as the hand flips them over. Moreover, she does leave the reader with something to carry over after the story is finished—but the illustrations are no credit to anyone. The book would have been better off with none.

Eleanor Graham

HODGES, C. W. *Shakespeare and the players.* Illus. by the author. 101 pp. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. Benn 6/-

This is a book for the school library. Mr. Hodges has attempted to simplify and explain the problems of the Shakespearean stage in a way which is half fictional, but wholly didactic, and for his reconstruction he has the approval of no less an authority than Professor Allardyce Nicholl. The actual mechanism of the playhouse is explained in action by an account of a day at Burbage's "Theatre," one of the two or three in existence when Shakespeare arrived in London, and by a description of the presenting of an actual play, "Richard III."

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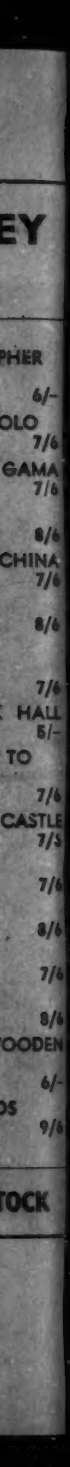
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